

**INFORMA**

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SUBJECT Upendra Nath Bannerjee, Leftist Editor of the Bengali Daily, Basumati

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1. Upendra Nath Bannerjee is the editor of one of the oldest Bengali dailies, the Basumati. Though Bannerjee, a former revolutionary of the Congress Party, is not presently affiliated with any political party, many of the editorials and views expressed in the Basumati follow the Communist Party line. However, he is not a member of the Communist Party.
2. The Basumati was formerly a pro-Congress daily but since Bannerjee was made editor, it is becoming more anti-Congress in its editorial policy. The second largest Bengali daily in Calcutta, this newspaper has a daily circulation of about 25,000. However, in spite of its leftist policy, there is an agreement between Bannerjee and Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy's ministry that the Basumati will not print any severe criticisms against Dr. Roy or the West Bengal Ministry.
3. Bannerjee was born in the French town of Chandernagore, Bengal, 6 June 1871. He was educated at Dupleix College, Chandernagore, and after completing his undergraduate studies there, he joined the medical college. He was forced to discontinue his studies at the latter college because of poor health, and for a while he became extremely religious, accepting initiation as a Sannyassi. However, he did not pursue his religious calling for long and took up teaching in Chandernagore and later in Bhadreswar.
4. He came to Calcutta in 1907 and joined the English language daily, Bande Mataram, and later on the Jugantar. Arrested in 1909 for his activities in connection with the Alipore bomb case, Bannerjee was sentenced to transportation for life. He returned to Calcutta after 12 years exile in the Andaman Islands when the British Government granted a general amnesty to all political prisoners. In 1921 he joined the editorial staff of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Dass's Bengali monthly journal, the Narayan. Later on he became the joint editor of Barindra Kumar Ghose's Bengali weekly, Bijali, and started the Bengali journal, Atma Sakti. While editor of the Atma Sakti he joined the Swaraj Party of C.R. Dass. Bannerjee was again arrested in 1923 and

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was sentenced to 3 years imprisonment in the Alipore jail. Upon his release from jail in 1926 he established connections with the Forward, the Liberty, the Amrita Bazar Patrika, and the Basumati.

5. Bannerjee played a leading role in the partition of Bengal in 1947 and is given credit for the support he rendered in having one-third of the province retained by the Indian Dominion. His published works are all in Bengali, and among the popular ones at present are the following: Unapanchasi (Famine of 1943), Nirbasiter Atmakatha (Story of an Exile), Father Sandhan (Quest of the Road), Dharma O Karma (Religion and Works), and Bartaman Samasya (Problem of the Day).

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\* Comment. Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy died in Calcutta on 20 February 1949.

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